

Back Then



The Mill Restaurant



De Olde Molen back then in 1964

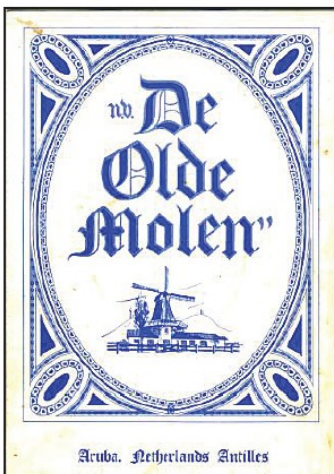
Go Dutch In Aruba. A highlight for all visitors to Aruba is the magnificent red Dutch windmill, an Aruban landmark, set not among canals but surrounded by cacti and coral. (When this story was written many, many years ago, the mill stood splendidly alone on a sand road, not as now surrounded by shops, a resort and other buildings.)

The structure, built in the province of Freisland, The Netherlands, in 1804, was used for the irrigation of lands below sea level, pumping or draining water into ditches and canals. In 1878, after being damaged by a storm and as more sophisticated irrigation systems were developed, the mill as disassembled and rebuilt to be used to grind grain.

In 1929, storms and fire damaged the mill severely and was not used again. In 1960, the remaining wooden structure was purchased by a Dutch merchant and shipped to his residence here in Aruba where it was built atop a two-story reinforced concrete structure. It was known in Dutch as

De Olde Molen (the old mill).

In 1973, after other owners, it became the home of the highly acclaimed The Mill Restaurant which serves fine international cuisine in a most welcoming and pleasurable atmosphere. (Update: the owner, Bill Waldron, trained some of



Aruba's finest chefs, bartenders and maitre d's that have served the island so well over the years.)

The second floor of The

Mill, around which runs a balcony, the perfect place to take pictures of the surrounding countryside and the adjacent bird sanctuary, houses the office of the restaurant. (Here one learned the old superstition that one must always go out the door you came in from. Visitors entering the office from the outside staircase and wanted to see the restaurant below, had to go back outside, down the stairs, and enter through the front door.)

The third floor tower space contains the complete and authentic mechanism of the mill consisting of mill stones for grinding grains, wooden gears and wooden shafts made of oak.

The Dutch flavor continues in the interior of the restaurant (which was expanded over the years from the original one room and bar area) located on the ground floor. In the bar area at the entrance, an excellent example of the world renowned Dutch genre art, the scenes of everyday life of the 17th century, has been transferred to tile and set into the wall. There is also a very large tile painting of an historic sailing ship which was found behind a plastered wall when construction began on an additional dining area running lengthwise across the back of the original structure.

Dutch antiques, such as a brass and wooden water pump and authentic Delft plates, vases and jars are also on display in the now three dining areas as are original oil paintings of Dutch scenes depicting the life and style of Holland.

Update: When Mr. Waldron sold the restaurant some many years later, it is believed that a hex was put on the building by an unknown witch for it has never been a successful business since.